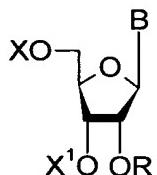


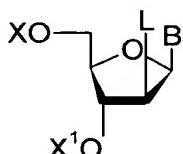
Amendments to the Abstract of the Disclosure:

Please replace the Abstract of the Disclosure with the following amended Abstract:

A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (1):



is provided, which comprises the reaction a compound of formula (2):



B
with a compound of formula $Al(OR)_3$ wherein R is as defined above under substantially anhydrous conditions. X , and $\underline{X^2} \underline{X^1}$ are each independently H or a protecting group, B is a base; R is an alkyl, alkoxyalkyl, alkenyl, or alkynyl group, each of which may be optionally substituted, and L is a leaving group.